

In the Claims:

The listing of claims will replace all prior versions and listings of the claims in the application:

1. (Canceled).
2. (Previously Canceled).
- 3-5. (Canceled).
6. (Previously Canceled).
- 7-9. (Canceled).
10. (Previously Canceled).
- 11-13. (Canceled)
14. (Previously Canceled).
15. (Canceled).

16. (Canceled).

17. (Canceled).

18. (Previously Canceled).

19. (Canceled).

20. (Previously Canceled).

21. (New) A method for case hardening a surface layer of a component consisting essentially of a cobalt chrome alloy, comprising the steps of:

activating the surface layer of the component by applying a layer of iron thereto; and

carburizing the activated surface layer of the component at a temperature and for a time insufficient for carbides to form on the surface layer.

22. (New) A method for case hardening a surface layer of a component consisting essentially of a cobalt chrome alloy, comprising the steps of:

activating the surface layer of the component by exposing the surface layer to a gaseous hydrogen halide mixture; and

carburizing the activated surface layer of the component at a temperature and for a time insufficient for carbides to form on the surface layer.